

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claims 1-9 (Previously Canceled).

Claim 10 (currently amended): A process for preparing a tungsten carbide comprising gas phase carburization of tungsten powders and/or suitable tungsten precursor compound powders at a temperature ranging from 850° to 950°, wherein the carburizing gas phase used is a CO₂/CO mixture with a CO₂ content which is above the Boudouard equilibrium content corresponding to the carburization temperature, and wherein the carburization is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to less than 1, wherein the process further comprises subjecting the tungsten carbide made by the process to a heat treatment at a temperature ranging from 1,150°C to 1,800°C after carburization, thereby forming the tungsten carbide.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process according to Claim 10, wherein carburization is carried out with a carbon activity ranging from 0.4 to 0.9.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process according to Claim 10, wherein the carburization temperature ranges from 900°C to 950°C.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process according to Claim 10, wherein the carburization is carried out at the carburization temperature over a period ranging from 4 to 10 hours.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process according to Claim 10, wherein the precursor compound is tungsten oxide powder.

Claim 15 (Canceled).